

falsely calling me a liar on the floor of this Senate and on Twitter. That is unfortunate.

What the Senator said right now is also incorrect. The Senator from Illinois said this amendment would halt the payments that are going out. This amendment doesn't do anything of the sort. This amendment restricts sending payments to people who are here illegally. When the Senator from Illinois said he would love to do that, with all due respect, that doesn't withstand even the slightest bit of scrutiny because if he would love to do that, all he had to do was not object, and the American citizens, the people who are here legally, would all get their \$1,400 checks, would get them on the exact same timeframe, but those here illegally would not.

Today's Democratic Party supports sending checks to millions of illegal immigrants. They have justified it, as the Senator from Illinois did, by falsely claiming none of them are getting checks. Those are not the facts, as the Newsweek fact-check makes clear.

I would note that a bill that Democratic Senators are trying to push, denominated H.R. 1, what many are calling the corrupt politicians act, would compound that by allowing millions of illegal immigrants to be registered to vote and, no doubt, to cast votes.

This is a political decision that is far outside the mainstream. It is unfortunate, but sadly it reflects where today's Democratic Party is.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 17, Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Brian Schatz, Amy Klobuchar, Benjamin L. Cardin, Cory A. Booker, Edward J. Markey, Angus S. King, Jr., Robert P. Casey, Jr., Chris Van Hollen, Sherrod Brown, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the nomination of Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 68, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 126 Ex.]

YEAS—68

Baldwin	Graham	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Portman
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Blunt	Heinrich	Romney
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Burr	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Lee	Stabenow
Cassidy	Lujan	Sullivan
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Tillis
Cornyn	Marshall	Tuberville
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cramer	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Fischer	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	

NAYS—30

Barrasso	Hawley	Rounds
Blackburn	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Boozman	Inhofe	Sasse
Braun	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lummis	Shelby
Cruz	McConnell	Thune
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Ernst	Paul	Wicker
Hagerty	Risch	Young

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono
Kennedy

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). On this vote, the yeas are 68, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from West Virginia.

REMEMBERING ROBERT GUTZ THOMPSON

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of a noble veteran, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend, brother, uncle, and someone I had been fortunate enough to call my dear brother-in-law, Robert Gutz Thompson.

What I always admired about Bob was his unparalleled work ethic and determination to learn and serve and to inspire those around him. Bob was a graduate of the University of Wyoming, Class of 1961. He then joined the military and entered flight training in 1963, and he was designated as a naval aviator in 1964. From the day he was motivated to join the military to his military retirement in 1983, he showcased steadfast dedication and a commitment to excellence that can only be matched by his loving devotion as part of our family.

Bob proudly served our Nation for more than 20 years and leaves behind a distinguished legacy of military history, including service aboard the USS *Intrepid*, the USS *Randolph*, the USS *Lexington*, and the USS *Forrestal*. He flew thousands of flight hours throughout his distinguished career. He trained other pilots. He commanded naval units, and he was deployed multiple times, including to the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, and the Arctic Circle. He earned the Navy Achievement Medal for his perform-

ance as Landing Signal Officer during a winter deployment to the North Atlantic.

In 1967, he joined the VS-30 squadron and reported to Key West, FL, as an instructor pilot. In 1970, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for recovering aircraft within the Arctic Circle. In 1972, Bob was selected for and attended the Naval War College in Rhode Island and then was assigned to the Naval Air Station Cecil Field, in Florida, to lead the squadron's relocation operations.

In 1976, he served aboard the USS *Forrestal* as operations officer. In 1979, Bob assumed command of the VS-30 squadron, where he deployed with his beloved Diamondcutters to the Mediterranean. Later that year, Bob received orders to the Pentagon to work on what is now known as GPS. His assignments were tough—squadron executive officer, squadron commander, instructor pilot, and so many more—but he was always tougher than they were. It is unbelievable the leader he was to all of those who served and served with pride.

Put simply, Bob was one of the most generous, kind, hard-working, and inspirational people I ever knew. My whole family and I adored Bob ever since he joined the family, and Bob's passing has left a deep impact on all of us. This is also an important time to celebrate Bob's life and the profound feelings of joy and pride that he brought to all of us.

While Bob wasn't born in West Virginia, he certainly was a Mountaineer, through and through, in his heart and soul and was a dedicated fan of his beloved WVU sports teams, especially football and basketball.

When visitors come to our little State, I jump at the chance to tell them we are home to the most hard-working and patriotic people in the Nation. We have fought in more wars; we have shed more blood; and lost more lives for the cause of freedom than most any other State. We have always done the heavy lifting, and no one has ever complained.

We have mined the coal, forged the steel that built the guns and ships and factories that have protected and continue to protect our country to this day.

I am so deeply proud of what West Virginians like my brother-in-law Bob Thompson have accomplished and what they will continue to accomplish to protect the freedoms that we all take for granted and hold so dear.

We have every reason to be proud and to stand tall knowing that West Virginia is the reason Americans sleep peacefully at night. It is because of all of our veterans, past and present, that we can proudly proclaim "Mountaineers Are Always Free," and we are all so very, very proud of our Bob for being a vital part of our legacy.

What is most important is that he lived a full life, surrounded by his loved ones. I extend all of our condolences to

my dear sister Janet, Bob's beloved wife of 56 years; his daughter Mary Jo; his son Peter; granddaughter Isabella; his siblings, Mary, Greg, Kathy, and Clark; his 24 Thompson nieces and nephews; his brothers-in-law John and Rock; sister-in-law Paula; and his 45 Manchin nieces and nephews.

Again, we extend our most sincere condolences for our shared loss of this remarkable—absolutely remarkable person. The unwavering love that Bob had for his family, his friends, and our Nation will live on forever in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing Robert Gutz Thompson. God rest, Bob.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to join my fellow Senators in remembering Senator MANCHIN's family, his sister, and the rest of his family as they deal with the loss of his brother-in-law.

I want to talk today about a draft I just received—a bill we are actually going to have a hearing on next week—S. 1, the so-called For the People Act.

This bill is the companion act to the House version of H.R. 1. I actually think it is even longer than H.R. 1, which I would have thought impossible. It is over 800 pages. I think they will be introducing the final version in the next day or so, and that is a good thing, since we are supposed to have a hearing on it in the middle of next week.

It packs a lot of what I consider bad changes relating to election administration, campaign finance, redistricting, and so much more into those 800 pages, but there is a lot of space there to pack things in.

I would have to take a lot more time than I have got today to talk about all the things in the bill that I have had concerns about, but I would say, to start with, this idea that one size fits all, this Federal takeover of elections, can't be in the interest of voters in our country.

It would force a single and, I believe, a partisan view of elections and how they should be run in 10,000 different jurisdictions in the country. I don't know how you do that. I don't know how you take 10,000 jurisdictions and try, at the Washington, DC, level in legislation, to determine changes like how they would register voters. Every State, under this bill, would do it exactly the same way—which voting systems they would use; how they would handle early voting and absentee ballots, no matter how long they had been doing it one way that worked for voters in their State; and how they maintain their voter list, whether you can go in and verify whether people on the voter list were still there.

We used to think that was a critically important protection in the election system; that you knew that the voters that had registered to vote in a jurisdiction actually were still in that

jurisdiction. It was actually, in every State, a bragging point of responsible election administration. That would largely go away in this bill.

This bill would require States to make ballot drop boxes available for 45 days prior to the Federal election. Those are boxes that—it even designates the locations and tells the local jurisdiction how they need to handle those ballots as they come out of the boxes and would be processed.

Remember, these are not mailboxes. They would be the ballot drop boxes all over the jurisdiction, if you could find one.

It would mandate unlimited ballot harvesting. That is a process where one person could collect and submit as many ballots as they could collect and submit. You know, in recent elections, we have seen ballot harvesting as a real problem in these elections. Not only does one person have your ballot and get that ballot to where it should be, frankly, one of the problems always with ballot harvesting is maybe a person who knows voters pretty well would collect 20 and put 18 in the mailbox or take 18 to the vote counting area and the other two just somehow don't get there.

Unlimited ballot harvesting, prohibited in many States—and, in fact, in recent years the Democratic House of Representatives failed to seat an elected Representative in North Carolina because that person had used ballot harvesting.

The bill would require States to allow felons to vote in Federal elections. If you didn't like that, in this case, you could have two sets of voter registrations, one for Federal elections and one for all other elections.

And, by the way, if you did that, you would also have to have two different sets of ballots for an election day that had both local and State and Federal issues on the ballot.

And this bill would require that all of these changes be made quickly. Even jurisdictions that recently have changed their processes and spent a lot of time talking to people about those changes over maybe 2 years or 4 years would suddenly be told, no, you have to change them one more time. And maybe it is a day here or a day there, but that makes a big difference if you have already got in your mind how far before an election you have to register to vote or transfer your address or things that election administrators work on all the time.

You know, my first elected job was as the county clerk in Greene County, Springfield, MO, where I was the chief election authority. We had a county of about 180,000 people in it, lots of registered voters, but you had to take that very seriously.

And later I was the chief election authority in our State for 8 years as the secretary of state, and I know how much planning goes into the elections. I know how seriously local officials take it.

I also know how difficult it could be if every change you made had to be cleared some way with somebody in Washington, DC.

You know, States can often take years to transition to a new ballot system or transition to a new way they do things. They also can do it very quickly if they need to, and we saw that happen in a number of States last year.

I think this bill, if it did pass, really doesn't allow the time you need for planning.

The diversity of our election system is one of the great strengths of our system. There is bipartisan agreement on that. I have quoted President Obama on this before, but he said in 2016: "There is no serious person out there who would suggest somehow that you can even rig America's elections, in part, because they are so decentralized and the numbers of votes involved."

This bill would undo that decentralized strength. It would undo that local and State responsibility for having laws that voters who vote for you understand you need to apply in the fairest and best way you can. The bill would make our system less diverse, less secure.

Unfortunately, this bill doesn't just stop at election administration. It takes the campaign finance system and changes it dramatically.

You know, when the Federal Elections Commission was created in the early 1970s, it was a six-member Commission. It was to be bipartisan. This turns it into a five-member Commission, with whoever is the President being able to appoint the third member on one side to always outvote, if they need to, the two members on the other side.

There have been many times, obviously, in the history of the Federal Election Commission when the vote has been 3 to 3 or 2 to 2, whatever the makeup was at the time. This would do away with that and basically turn the Commission from a bipartisan Commission into a prosecutorial body, where one side always has the majority if they want it. I think voters should and would be very concerned about that.

It would allow the Chair of the FEC to make key staffing changes. It would allow judges to review cases, even when the Commission found no violation of the law.

In addition, the bill would create a system of public financing for political campaigns by matching certain contributions with Federal dollars. The match would be 6 to 1. So in the matchable, low-dollar—whatever you define that to be—contributions, if you raise \$100,000 of those contributions, you would have \$700,000. Six hundred thousand of those dollars could have been used by the Federal Government for other things rather than to finance politicians in a campaign.

Now, I understand why politicians would like that. I have raised as much money as most people in this body have raised, and, you know, the idea

that just the Federal Government would come in at some point and give me \$6 for some percentage of those that I raised might be pretty appealing, but I think it would be wrong.

It takes jurisdiction away from the States into how to draw congressional districts. Now, this is going to be inconvenient if it passes because the Constitution specifically says the State legislatures decide how to draw a congressional district. It doesn't say the Congress of the United States tells the State legislatures how to draw congressional districts, but this bill would do that.

The bill requires redistricting commissions. It dictates who would serve on the commissions. It sets the criteria and the procedures for how you draw the maps. It lays out how the commissions have to take public input.

And if that weren't bad enough—it doesn't stop there—it even determines which courts act on all redistricting cases. And this would be a dramatic change where, again, you have a one-size-fits-all system in a country that clearly is not a one-size-fits-all country.

Since very few States currently have commissions like that, it would set a lot of deadlines that we don't currently have. Districts drawn using 2020 census data would all but be guaranteed to be drawn by Federal courts just because of the time that this bill sets out.

But the Federal court drawing the district isn't the big problem. The big problem is forever you have changed this and forever you have put the DC Circuit as the ultimate circuit to determine all redistricting cases. We have never thought that power belonged in Washington, DC, before, but this bill does.

It is an unprecedented power grab by the Federal Government at the expense of the States. I think it is a transparent attempt to stack elections in favor of one party. Election law should not be about a single party.

If this bill were to pass, it would do nothing, in my view, to bolster public confidence in elections. In fact, I suspect most election officials around the country would begin to say: I would like to be able to do something about that problem, but we will have to clear that with Washington, DC, first.

I think the divisions in the country would be worse, not better. Successful election laws are passed on a bipartisan basis. We did that with the Help America Vote Act after 2000. We provided assistance and some direction with the finances, but we didn't change a single State law after 2016. We left that up to the States. We created bipartisan impact when we did that.

We should continue to put the strength and the security of the country's elections before party. We should continue to oppose the efforts of a single party to make sweeping partisan changes in our election system. I don't talk to anybody who doesn't think that this bill, as a similar bill passed the

House, would pass the House on a purely partisan basis. That would be a bad idea.

I encourage my colleagues to look carefully at S. 1, and I think if you do, a majority of the Senate will not support this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

FOREIGN THREAT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on March 6 of this year, the intelligence community issued its "Intelligence Community Assessment on Foreign Threats to the 2020 U.S. Federal Elections." Based on that report, some in the liberal media have falsely claimed that my and Senator JOHNSON's Hunter Biden-related oversight activity last Congress was based on Russian disinformation. Even Peter Strzok felt the need to chime in on Twitter to say that we received Russian disinformation.

I don't know how many times I have to say it, but such claims are false and misleading. To be precise, Senator JOHNSON and I didn't receive, solicit, or rely upon any information from Andrii Derkach, and we publicly said so many times.

I don't know how many times last fall I was on this floor of the U.S. Senate trying to explain that to the people who were making those accusations. It seems like Strzok pays just about as careful attention to these facts as he did to the Crossfire FISA applications. Of course, Twitter lets

disinformation about the Steele dossier run wild on their platform yet shuts down still unrefuted reporting on Hunter Biden before the 2020 election. In other words, we have a double standard.

Now, regarding Russian disinformation, it wasn't Senator JOHNSON and this Senator that dealt in it. It happens to be very clear that the other side, the Democrats, were dealing with it. Here's one quick example. If you want more, then I would refer you to section 10 of our September 23, 2020, report.

On July 13, 2020, then-Minority Leader SCHUMER, Senator WARNER, Speaker PELOSI, and Representative SCHIFF sent a letter with a classified attachment to the FBI to express a purported belief that Congress was the subject of a foreign disinformation campaign.

The classified attachment to that letter included unclassified elements that attempted, but failed, to tie our work to Derkach. Those unclassified elements were leaked to the press to support a false campaign accusing us two Senators of using Russian disinformation.

Then, during the course of our investigation, we ran a transcribed interview of George Kent. Before that interview, the Democrats acquired Derkach's materials. During that interview, they asked the witness about it. He stated: "What you're asking me to interpret is a master chart of disinformation and malign influence."

At that interview, the Democrats introduced known disinformation into the investigative record as an exhibit. More precisely, the Democrats relied upon and disseminated known disinformation from a foreign source whom the intelligence community warned was actively seeking to influence U.S. politics. Yet now—can you believe this?—they accuse this Senator and Senator JOHNSON of doing that very thing. Now let that sink in because there is a case of double standard around here.

It is clear that the Democrats hope that their self-created disinformation campaign would drown out our report and its findings to protect Candidate Biden from the facts. Now that President Biden is in office, the facts aren't going anywhere.

I had an opportunity to serve 28 years in the Senate with Senator Biden. I liked him then; I still like him. But that doesn't mean that I like the double standard the press has toward President Biden and us Republicans.

As President Biden gears up for his first press conference, he ought to answer for the fact that his family was and possibly still is financially connected to Chinese nationals with links to the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army. Indeed, Hunter Biden reportedly admitted that he was well aware that some of his business associates were connected to the Communist Chinese Government intelligence services. Now, double standard—where is the media in asking serious questions about that?

It has also been reported that emails show Joe Biden and his brother were "office mates" with the very same Chinese nationals with links to the Communist regime and the its military. Now, talk about a double standard. Where is the media in asking serious questions about that? Yet they are reporting this very day about things that Johnson and Grassley did about disinformation, which I have told you so many times we never received.

Now there is this interview on television with Tony Bobulinski, publicly stating that Joe Biden was aware of and possibly involved in Hunter Biden's business deals. Talk about a double standard. Where is the media asking serious questions about that?

The Biden family transactions and associations in our September 20 report raised criminal, counterintelligence, and extortion concerns. Yet the media—the liberal media—has ignored all of it and has failed to ask any legitimate questions. Don't you think that we the people have a right to know the answers?

The media certainly seemed to think so in all the doings of the Trump administration. If the story I just laid out here were about Trump, I guarantee you that it would be all over the news.

It is perfectly legitimate and reasonable for Congress and the news media to question the Biden administration